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**Subject:** EPA Taps Koch Industries' Chemical Engineer To Lead Research Office | InsideEPA.com

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## EPA Taps Koch Industries' Chemical Engineer To Lead Research Office

EPA has appointed David Dunlap, a chemical engineer with Koch Industries, as the deputy chief of its research office, a move that will provide the office with political leadership at the deputy level, which does not require Senate confirmation, while allowing the agency to avoid another bruising battle over an industry nominee for the office.

While Dunlap will not require Senate approval, his appointment will almost certainly draw criticism from environmentalists and Democrats, who have long been concerned about Koch's political network and its strong deregulatory agenda.

Dunlap is also likely to face strong criticism for his participation in an industry meeting with EPA officials regarding the agency's long-stalled assessment of the risks of formaldehyde.

Because the deputy administrator for the Office of Research and Development (ORD) does not require Senate confirmation, Dunlap's appointment will allow the administration to sidestep a Senate confirmation battle, a process that has already killed the administration's nomination of Michael Dourson, a toxicologist and consultant viewed as too closely tied to industry, as ORD's assistant administrator.

Jennifer Orme-Zavaleta, ORD's acting chief and a longtime career scientist at the agency, sent an email to ORD staff Oct. 1, welcoming Dunlap to the agency.

Dunlap will replace Richard Yamada, the first Trump ORD deputy, who left the agency abruptly three weeks ago.

Orme-Zavaleta writes that Dunlap “brings more than 30 years of environmental engineering and policy experience to his new role,” including municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plant operations, maintenance, permitting and compliance, managing waste cleanups for state and federal clients, and serving as a contractor to the Office of Water's science technology office, where he helped develop effluent guidelines.

Her announcement describes Dunlap as a chemical engineer, adding that “[m]ost recently David’s roles have been focused on critical policy and science questions in the areas of chemicals in commerce and point and non-point source water discharges.”

Dunlap's “hands-on field and regulatory policy experience ... will help him bridge the gap between science and policy and allow ORD to produce practical, high quality, and objective science that supports the Agency’s program and regional offices as they implement the statutes and regulations for which each is responsible,” Orme-Zavaleta writes.

Ryan Jackson, EPA's chief of staff, also welcomed Dunlap to the agency. “As a chemical engineer, Mr. Dunlap has worked on environmental issues for nearly 30 years with a focus on assessing risk. His extensive experience on regulatory issues will be pivotal in our mission to protect human health and the environment.”

Neither statement mentions Dunlap's most recent previous employer, Koch Industries. Dunlap's LinkedIn page indicates he has worked at Koch Industries since May 2010, where he holds the title of director of environmental regulatory affairs.

## **Koch Industries**

Dunlap describes his role at Koch as a “[l]ead and subject matter expert with a primary focus on water and wastewater ([Safe Drinking Water Act] and [Clean Water Act]) and chemicals and chemical management ([Toxic Substances Control Act]) for Koch Industries, Inc.”

He adds that he “provides technical, regulatory, policy and legislative leadership and support to the entire suite of Koch Companies, including refining, petrochemicals, building products and paper, nylon/intermediates/polymers, glass, automotive products, electrical components and even cattle.”

It was also in his role at Koch Industries that Dunlap was among the industry representatives who met with EPA officials regarding the agency's long-running Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) assessment of the human health risks of exposure to formaldehyde.

Democratic senators say a draft version of the document has been stalled because of industry and political appointees' concerns over its finding that exposure to the substance causes leukemia.

Since then, Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler has said that the formaldehyde assessment will be released once he has completed a review of its accuracy.

“I'm sure that we will release it, but I need to make sure that the science in the report is still accurate, and what I've asked, not just for that report but for everything that we're doing on the IRIS program, [is] to make sure that we know the purpose of the assessment,” Wheeler said during an Aug. 1 hearing before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

In addition to their concerns about the formaldehyde assessment, Democrats and their allies have long raised concerns about ties between Trump administration officials at EPA and other agencies and the conservative Koch brothers, who fund many GOP candidates and conservative groups.

Last spring, Democratic senators sent letters seeking information about the network, after one of its groups claimed credit for various EPA deregulatory efforts. Their April 18 letter to EPA requested by May 15 documentation of any communications between EPA employees and Koch Industries and related organizations.

“Long-standing members of the Koch network fill the ranks of the federal government, raising concerns about the network's access to and influence over federal decision-making. Americans have a right to know if special interests are unduly influencing public policy decisions that have profound implications for public health, the environment, and the economy,” the senators write in the letter.

Dunlap's LinkedIn page also notes his involvement as a steering committee member of the Agricultural Nutrient Policy Council (ANPC), starting in January 2015. According to congressional testimony, the council was formed by several agriculture industry groups in September 2010, including the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Fertilizer Institute, the National Pork Producers Council, the National Corn Growers Association, and the Agribusiness Retailers.

One of ANPC's early efforts was “examining agriculture’s contributions of nutrients and sediments to the Chesapeake Bay,” according to testimony the group's senior advisor, Tom Hebert, gave to a House agriculture subcommittee in March 2011.

“This is of course a critical issue for water quality in the Bay and in the context of the Chesapeake Bay [total maximum daily load (TMDL)] rulemaking and the associated state

watershed implementation plans. Many in the agricultural community have been deeply concerned that the process and speed with which EPA was moving to conclude the TMDL rulemaking was going to encumber sound and accurate supporting analysis.” -- *Maria Hegstad* ([mhegstad@jwpnews.com](mailto:mhegstad@jwpnews.com))

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